

# SYNTROPY



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# SYNTROPY

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Dear reader

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit my hometown. You can't imagine the thrill I felt when I saw, once again, those big green mountains, the animals grazing in the valleys, and the feeling of the air impregnated with chlorophyll. That brought a lot of memories to my mind. I want to share one with you.

Thank you very much.

## Redox reaction

*"Every seed has something to fulfill."*  
my grandmother used to say.

She said that just before making dinner and after cleaning the fireplace, setting a few pieces of wadded-up paper, and making a bed of dry kindling wood in a crisscross pattern on top.

Then, she would take an elongated fire core and force it against the abrasive material on the side of the box. At the point of impact,

sparks erupted violently, and then, a few seconds later, they stabilized[1]. At its peak reaction, grandma would stare somewhat fascinated as the light ripped through kitchen darkness, as if she had the power to make that happen.

At first, I thought it was just a fantastic tale, like those we read at school. According to the teacher: *"A traditional, typically ancient narrative that authorities used as a*

[1] It was thanks to the action of red phosphorus and antimony sulphide, the second being added to limit ignition to a specific point.

*fundamental type in the worldview of a people, explaining aspects of the natural world or delineating the psychology, customs, or ideals of society, passed on from one generation to the next."*

At that moment and like our ancestors, my grandma represented such material—and the mysterious essence of its flame—with many things: the creational forces of the spirit, of passion, of hate, of love, of the relationship with the beyond and the unknown energy: *"Just as the stars, our destiny is to burn to finally*

*evolved in something completely different."*

As I grew older, I realized that, at some point in our existence, in some sort, we have been right. As if attributing to the gods such a substance was not possible because its knowledge completely changed the taste and availability of food, scared away predators, improved hunting, and later, helped as a tool to the domestication of animals and plants, and the establishment of the first families. Whether stolen or granted by the gods, religious women were right in saying that



with it came the spirit or inner fire, as well as the hope that makes us forget death. It was the beginning of absolute predominance over other species. Its influence in arts and techniques made possible the new role: the architects of a new world.

That is not to forget that duality is a constant in the universe. The Oxidation-Reduction Reaction of materials has both beneficial and destructive properties -regardless of whether they are in solid, liquid, or gaseous state -once they reach the correct temperature and

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pressure to generate combustion gases (in solids) or vapors (in liquids). The importance is the use that we make of them. In other words, fire is linked to progress and creation, but also suffering and destruction, as well as life.

That may seem a little like magic. A three-centimeters wood chip (embedded in a solution of mono ammonium phosphate[2] and kerosene with a head of potassium chlorate gel), which produces small explosions, gases, and

[2] It prevents incandescence once the flame extinguishes.

vapors (when rubbed in the presence of oxygen), ascending and reacting, making a self-sustaining and progressive process. Of course, for a limited time.

I believe she represented all that. She was a means by which the Universe set some people in the right direction -including me-. Perhaps, a wooden stem consumed for a brief moment, tearing the shadows around her. I am still carrying a bit of its warmth.

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